



THE WARITH MAGAZINE

An Official Magazine of the Holy Shrine of Imam Hussain (as)







EDITORIAL

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

By the grace of God, we humbly present to the Imam of our time, the sixth issue of The Warith Magazine.

In the current global atmosphere of self-isolation and social distancing, many people are becoming frustrated and losing hope due to the challenges that have emerged. In face of such hardships it is imperative for us to remember the most beautiful connection to the Ahlul Bayt that we have been granted by God. In times of difficulty, we are always able to refer back to the great struggle of our master Imam Hussain (as) and recognize that whatever adversity we may face cannot compare to his matchless sacrifice. With that in mind, this issue looks to enliven our remembrance of Imam Hussain (as) by addressing various topics with regards to his holy personality.

This time our contributors have presented different aspects from the life of Imam Hussain (as) and his revolution. Our first article is a reflection on the difficulties we are facing in today's world and how Imam Hussain (as) can be used as a source of inspiration. The second article focuses on the inimitable nature of the movement of Karbala and its effectiveness as opposed to other revolutions. Our final article is the conclusion to the two-part series emphasizing the parallels between Imam Hussain (as) and Prophet Yahya (as).

Lastly, we have a beautiful poem that focuses on the hope in God's beneficence that inspires us to get through our struggles in these days. As always, we finish the issue off with some questions and answers.

Many hands have worked together to bring this issue to fruition, and we hope it can be a source of inspiration for all that are struggling in these challenging times. I would like to thank our content contributors, editors, artists, designers, and The Batool Foundation for their contributions.



Syed Hussain Ali
Editor of The Warith Magazine



TABLE OF CONTENTS

08

A Reflection On Our Current
State of Affairs

Sayyid Imran Haydar



12

Karbala: The Greatest Revolution

Sadiq Meghjee



16

Imam Hussain and Prophet
Yahya Part 2

Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi



22

Beneficence

Shaykh Muhammad Yasin

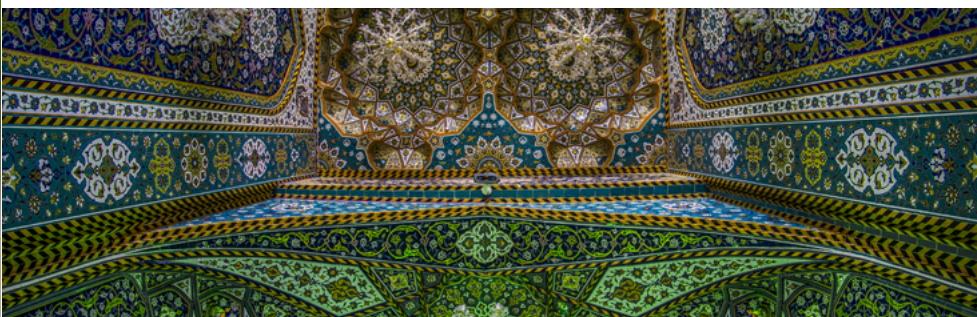


24

Questions & Answers

Our Contributors and Editors





THE WARITH MAGAZINE

The Official Magazine of the Holy Shrine of Imam Hussain (as)



Director of Publications:

Dr. Mohammed Hussein Ali Malik
(The Holy Shrine of Imam Hussain a.s)

Editor-in-chief:

Syed Hussain Ali

Sub-Editor:

Dr. Zoheir Ali Esmail

Art Director & Designer

Muhammaddally Sherali

Project Coordinator:

Safwan Jamal Eddine
(The Holy Shrine of Imam Hussain a.s)



Publication of The Department of
Islamic Studies and Research
(The Holy Shrine of Imam Hussain a.s)

A Reflection On Our Current State of Affairs



Over the last fifty years, humans have successfully become a global village. This has proven to be beautiful for humanity at large, as everyone is connected and we have learnt so much about each other across the globe: The cultures, the colours, the innovations, and inventions. While there are many benefits of globalization, alongside it are its side effects. In such an environment, things spread so quickly around the globe and diseases are no exception. The whole world is now under the grip of a Pandemic and we are all facing difficulties.

We were not prepared for what we have been experiencing the last few months because of the novel corona virus. One difference between the Spanish flu and what we are undergoing now, is how much our lifestyles have changed.

Our life today is amazingly fast paced, some people may complain that we are very engrossed in technology, to a point that we may not have the social skills to interact with other human beings in person. Be that as it may, we are still very connected. This connection may not be on a physical everyday-conversation-type level, but rather a link across many mediums and platforms, especially the social-media networks. The people we go to school with, the people we see at work, people we run into at the gym, our neighbours – there may not be much verbal communication happening there, but we are used to being around them, and are used to having them around us.

And now because of the circumstances, most of that has been taken away from us. What remains, is us and the people we live with. For some it is family, others maybe a fraternity. What also makes it worse is the general mindset. The mood on a global level. Allow me to explain: This is not happening on some geographically distant, war-torn, famine struck, maybe even diseased area on the map. For instance, let us take the Tsunami of 2004. I am sure, anyone who heard about what transpired, genuinely felt bad about it as we all saw the pictures and videos. Nonetheless, it did not directly affect all of us.

But what we are going through today is different. It has consumed the whole world and has affected everyone, all at once. Hence, no one is distant from the reality that exists outside our doors. The sirens from the ambulances, the rushed traffic outside of hospitals, the constant news updates, and the worry of not knowing what is in store for tomorrow. One thing has become noticeably clear:



Sayyid Imran Haydar was raised in Abu Dhabi and moved to the holy city of Qum after finishing his secular education. He has studied the traditional Islamic Sciences in Qum and Damascus and is currently pursuing a masters in Islamic Mysticism

life is fragile. I am sure your 2020 is not panning out as planned. While the pharmaceutical companies race to find a vaccine for the virus, it has given many people some time to reflect. To reflect on life, on its meaning and their objectives.

You see, we have conditioned ourselves to perform and to deliver, to be on a routine, every single day, to a point that most of us do not even know how to take a break. And now that we are forced to take a break, some of us are struggling. Some of us, may have mastered the skills of being with other human beings, and working with them in a system. But what we neglect and have not learnt, is how to be with ourselves.

They say, only in solitude is a man able to identify who he is. True colors of people show when no one is watching. It is only him, and his Lord. This is when man truly starts to learn about himself.

Have we ever thought about ourselves this way? Do we even know who we are, what we are doing, and what is next?

As far as who we are as human beings, our place in the cosmos and how God has introduced us in the Holy Book, that is beyond the scope of this article, but in context of what is next for us, we must first understand what must be done now.

The first place a believer would look for answers, is the Holy book.

In chapter 67 verse 2 of the Holy Qur'an, Allah says:



“He, who created death and life, that He may test you - which of you is best in conduct. And He is the All-mighty, the All-forgiving.”

After reading the verse mentioned above, we are able to take away a few points:

1. God created death as He created life. There is no escaping death, as he mentions in another place in the Holy book:



Every soul must experience the taste of death. We test you with both hardships and blessings. And unto us you shall be returned.” (21:35)

2. Life is a test. When you evaluate something there is a reason behind it, God does not evaluate us because he does not know our value, He tests us so that we know our worth.



“On that day, mankind will issue forth in various groups to be shown their deeds.” (99:6)

3. Death is something that all of us shall surely taste but what is next?

In short, we learn from the Holy Book that after the human leaves this material world, his soul travels to the immaterial, where he shall be stationed eternally. Where that is, depends on who he was and what he did in this world.



“So, whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.” (99:7-8)

There are other verses that describe the stations of man after he has left this world, but we get the general idea that: **this life is limited, and the hereafter is forever.**

So, what we have now will certainly perish and what is to come is eternal. This is also what we understand from Islamic traditions, such as the famous narration from the Prophet of Islam (saw), where he says:

الدنيا مزرعة الآخرة

This world is but a farmland, what you sow here, you reap in the hereafter.

This also negates the claims of those who say: “we should give up on this world and only focus on the hereafter”. Correctly understanding the above tradition, you can see where they are mistaken. In short, there is no reaping without the sowing. The world is your land of opportunity, your time to hustle, so tomorrow you may “harvest” what becomes of it.

If you believe Allah is your one true Lord, you will surely start paying attention. The world and the hereafter go hand in hand. If you have made it the way it is supposed to be in this world, then and only then will you be ready to welcome what comes after. Otherwise things can get interesting, to say the least.

As for the tests, Allah also speaks of their nature: “Be sure We shall try you with something of fear and hunger and loss of wealth and life and the fruits (of your labor); but give tidings of happiness to those who have patience. Those who, when an affliction visits them, say, “Indeed we belong to Allah, and to Him do we indeed return.” [2:155 &156]

What is this? Returning to the basics for a reset! One place to start is to constantly remind yourself of the temporary nature of this life. The GOAL is to stay focused on how your actions here will reflect in the hereafter. This is exceedingly difficult to attain if you lead a life which is NOT in accordance with the teachings of the Prophet (saw) and his Holy Progeny (as). Like any journey in your personal development, there are obstacles and shortfalls, which again is the nature of it all. Although, as mentioned in the first verse cited here:

Allah is all-forgiving and Merciful, thus there is no room for losing hope in a beautiful tomorrow.

The second step is to have a game plan, know your HALAL and HARAM, your rights and responsibilities, the ideals provided by Allah for guidance and start moving towards the finish line.

This is what we shall focus on for the rest of this article: The ideals.

The Prophet (saw) is quoted to have said that after his passing from this temporal world he is leaving behind two weighty things: The Holy Book and the Holy Progeny, his Ahl al Bayt. If we refer to both for guidance, then the prophet shall wait for us at the pond of Kawthar, chalice in hand, with a drink, I imagine, so sweet that it makes us forget all that we had to go through in life. An elixir that refreshes us and rejuvenates our souls and cleanses all the toxicity of our attachments in this world.

Therefore, in times of despair, this is the doorstep we must come to for inspiration. When faced with travesty and certain death, one man and his people outshine all those in recorded history: Hussain, son of 'Ali and Fatima, grandson of the prophet of Islam and one of the Ahl al Bayt. Born in the life of the Prophet, in Medina, he witnessed at the age of 6 the passing away of the Messenger of Islam. Not long after that, he lost his mother as well.

His father after the death of the 3rd caliph assumed the reigns of caliphate. Imam Hussain (as) then accompanied his father in many battles, because of the civil unrest amongst the Muslims. At the end of this period he saw his father covered in blood, assassinated while in prayer. The thirst for rulership drove the Umayyads into causing a major conflict in the Muslim umma, which forced the hand of Imam Hasan (as) in signing a peace treaty with Muawiya. One of the clauses in this treaty was that Yazid, the son of Muawiya would not be assigned caliph. But alas, this was not honoured and Imam Hussain (as) refused to give allegiance to one not worthy of leading the Ummah.

I want you to join me and imagine how the Imam (as) navigated through this extremely difficult situation:

Islam is in trouble, a wretched being sits atop the pulpit that once belonged to the Prophet (saw).

To see all the efforts of the Prophet washed away by a violator of the divine laws, one who ridicules everything the Messenger stood for, is unacceptable.

Imam Hussain leaves Medina and heads to Mecca. In Mecca, he is informed of assassins around the Ka'ba, posing as pilgrims. If anyone is to understand the sanctity of the Ka'ba, it is Hussain (as). Bloodshed in the Holy vicinity? Something he cannot allow.

Alongside his family and close ones, Imam Hussain begins moving towards Kufa, where still reside some of his father's companions. Yet, his journey is cut short, and his caravan, forced to take another route. They now move towards a place his grandfather spoke of on many instances, and every mention of it would make the prophet shed tears: Karbala, the land of Karb (worry) and Balaa (tribulation).

This is where his ultimate test is recorded in history, a source of inspiration for the world to witness and take lesson from. In poetry and in prose, in all the languages that the lovers speak, the event of 'Ashura is preserved, as if it were only yesterday. This is where creation witnessed the severed head of Hussain (as) atop a spear.

"Or dost thou think that the Companions of the Cave and of the Inscription were wonders among Our Sign?" [18:9]

In this event, I would like to direct your attention to one saying, that still resonates as a source of inspiration through the centuries. When Imam Hussain was with his son Ali Akbar, and the Imam informed him of their certain death. Ali Akbar asked:

"Are we not in the right?"

Imam Hussain (as) responded: "Why not my dear one. We are in the right."

Ali Akbar then said:

"What is then to worry about death."

It did not matter to Ali Akbar how, when or where his death came. He was ready for this greatest test because for the one who is prepared for and fixated on the goal, it is of little concern. Concerned are the ones who are not ready for the meeting with their Lord and to be held accountable for their deeds. Only the one who has spent all his life preparing for this meeting will look forward to it.

KARBALA

THE GREATEST REVOLUTION



Humanity in the 21st century finds itself at the summit of thousands of years of human endeavour and struggle. The toil and labour of people bygone, the progress and innovations of genius minds, combined with numerous other events and occurrences in history have sculpted the rich tapestry of society and life that the modern person takes for granted. Out of all these forces and events that have collectively shaped and defined the world today, none could be more far-reaching and significant than the countless revolutions, sacrifices and tales of heroism that have, for better or for worse, left its landmark in world history and forged the future for generations coming after it.

Revolution, loosely defined as a sudden change in a political system, or more broadly as an overthrow of a prevalent paradigm in favour of a new one, as a cursory glance of history would attest to, has been a regular feature of human life. Since time immemorial humans have banded together, and given the right amount of motivation combined with a cause worth fighting for, have bravely put their own necks on the line attempting to correct the perceived wrong in society, or trying to do away with systems considered contrary to their cherished ideals.

Going back a millenia or so, one such instance was the stand made by the Greeks in the face of the invading Persian army, known as the Battle of Thermopylae. A group of a couple of hundred men fought to the death to keep out the invading army, an event that has of late catapulted into popular culture thanks to its epic cinematic adaptation. Yet even though they were all killed, the city they were protecting, Sparta, remained untouched, and their tale of bravery, in face of the odds against them, was etched into the history books as a legend for people to marvel at centuries later. Yet what motivated the Spartans to stand so defiantly? The will to protect their own city state? The desire to retain autonomy and freedom from foreign dictates? We'll return to this later.

Fast forward to more recent times, with the turn of the 17th century and the rise of the "Enlightenment", the world was rocked in ways hitherto unseen in France and America. Both countries witnessed a movement to do away with the old systems of governance and establish a 'new society' predicated on the Enlightenment ideals of exclusive reason and rationalism, free from any overt religious interference.



Sadiq Meghjee was born and raised in London. After finishing his education he trained as a Financial Accountant while working in London for over 7 years. In 2015 he moved to Qom to pursue Islamic Studies and is currently finishing his Bachelors In Jurisprudence and Philosophy.

While such movements became the foundation and catalyst of what would be referred to as modern society, restricted by its secular world view it did not aim at accomplishing anything beyond a change of affairs in the material realm, and in doing so, neglected the greatest need man could have, the need for the Divine.

Coming to the 19th and 20th century, with the rise of colonialism and the ensuing of world wars, the world witnessed numerous struggles and resistance movements, all fighting for the right of self-determination and freedom. From the likes of Steve Biko, an activist in South Africa who fought against apartheid and was killed for doing so, to leaders like Patrice Lumumba, outspoken and defiant in his pursuit of the freedom for the people of Congo from the colonial control of Belgium. Similarly, when it comes to the clash of ideologies, or economic systems, countless movements of a similar nature took place too, with figures like Che Guevara becoming the face of the struggle against American imperialism. Yet one thing that all of these sacrifices, stands, revolutions, call them whatever you wish, have in common, is that they were confined purely to a secular framework, and as such were myopic in nature, unable to provide humans with the much needed remedy of filling the innate imperfection that can only be filled by the presence of God.

I should add that this critique isn't intended to diminish the humanitarian value of such movements, such ideas are already well-established and it would be preposterous to advocate such an idea, but rather to briefly touch on why, they cannot be seen as the pinnacle or ideal type of movement.

In this light, I wish to contrast the above with what unfolded in the sands of Karbala, Iraq, in the 61st year Hijri. When the Imam Hussain (as) was leaving Medina he says in his famous will to Muhammad Hanafiyya: "I do not leave Medina for evilness or corruption. I wish to reform the affairs of my grandfather's ummah. I want to enjoin good and forbid evil and follow the tradition of the Messenger of Allah and my father, Ali Ibn Abi Talib." From the onset of the journey we can see the Divine worldview in which this movement is starting, the main concern of the Imam being of reform and enjoining good. In the ziyara of Arbaeen we pay tribute to the Imam by saying: "So, he called to you flawlessly, gave advices, and sacrificed his soul for You, to save Your servants from ignorance." The purpose of Imam Hussain's movement was one of awakening, reviving, and restoring the Prophetic mission - it was this concern to protect the flickering and weakened light of the celestial divine movement that renders the Imam's movement incomparable to anything else the world has seen.

Elsewhere Imam Hussain (as) spoke great words of wisdom, trying to shake people out from the love of the world they had slipped into and get them to glance again at the reality around them, the ignorance in which they had befallen and the distance that had fallen between them and the camp of righteousness. In a remarkable tradition of his, the Imam (as) reprimands the people, saying: "Verily, people are the slaves of the world and their religion is superficial, only on their tongues. They are attentive to it as long as their material benefits are provided, but when they are tested, the number of true devotees dwindles".



So, he called to you flawlessly, gave advices, and sacrificed his soul for You, to save Your servants from ignorance.

Human beings are made of two components, the earthly (the body) and the divine (the spirit), and it is only when the message and purpose of a movement encompasses both of these aspects that it can be complete and claim to be clothed in perfection.

And it is for this reason that the movement of Imam Hussain (as) stands out from among the hundreds of other stories of sacrifice the way a diamond stands out amidst a pit of stones. Karbala was a stand for justice and reform completely unpolluted and purified from any ulterior motives, even in the smallest of forms. Unlike other revolutions and movements that the world has seen, there was no hidden nationalism, no political machinations, opportunism or revenge, no xenophobia towards foreign invaders, no struggle of ideologies, no financial incentive and neither a fight for sovereignty nor self-determination. It was a pristine call to awaken the soul from its slumber and reunite it with the infinite ocean of Divinity.

The stand Imam Hussain (as) made was an open call for righteousness and justice, purely for the sake of the oppressed, detached from any ethnic boundaries. It was timeless, formless, ever pervasive, an eternal "peoples" revolution in the truest sense of the word. Given its divine footing, within it can be found every positive characteristic – patience, forbearance, courage, humility, forgiveness, love, sacrifice, altruism. It contains examples for every role in society: a father, a son, a brother etc. Most importantly however, everything Imam Hussain (as) did was infused with the love of God. Not one step was taken but God's ultimate pleasure was sought, not one opinion expressed but God was the focal point for which it originated. That is not to say that all other freedom movements are worthless, there are many that have acted valiantly and bravely, yet in light of the above, and the worldviews in which they were carried and were called to, they are incommensurable with the mission of Imam Hussain . While on the surface level, history will recall the scene of Karbala as one of carnage, yet hidden beyond the apparent there is a form of beauty the world has never seen before, nor will ever see again...



Parallels Between Imam Hussain (as) & Prophet Yahya (as) Part 2



This article is based on three speeches given in December 2010 at Baitul Qaim Centre, New Jersey. Some derivatives from this theme have been omitted from this article since they were more suitable for a lecture format.

Introduction:

The message of all prophets was essentially the same since it originates from a single source – the Almighty God. As such, similarities between the teachings and stances of the prophets shouldn't surprise anyone. The similarities become more pronounced when we look at the lives of the divine guides from the Abrahamic family. You will undoubtedly notice many similarities between the two familial branches of Prophet Abraham (as): the Ishmaelites (from Isma'il) and the Israelites (from Ishaq). This is part two of the article focusing on the similarities between Imam Hussain (as) and Prophet Yahya (John the Baptist).

Similarities in Qualities:

Moving on to Surah Aal-e-Imran, Allah has described Prophet Yahya with **5 qualities**. These qualities can be found in both Yahya and Hussain. See the verses 38-39:

Verse 38: Then Zakariyyah prayed to his Lord, saying, "My Lord! Grant me from Thee a good offspring. You surely hear all prayers."

Verse 39: Then the angels said to him while he was praying in the Sanctuary, "Allah gives you the good news of a son named Yahya who will be (1) the verifier of 'a word of Allah' (i.e., 'Isa), (2) the honourable, (3) the chaste and (4) a prophet from (5) among the good ones."

1) Both were 'Verifiers'

Yahya was 'the verifier' who came to prepare the people for the advent of 'Isa (Jesus). And Hussain was the verifier of the Prophet of Islam by the way of his sacrifice. The Prophet (saw) himself had said: "Hussain is from me and I am from Hussain."

The truth of the Prophet's message only survived by the sacrifice of Hussain. After the tragedy of Karbala, an Umayyid in Medina taunted Imam Zaynul 'Abideen by asking, "Who is the victorious now?" The Imam responded, "When the time of *ṣalaat* comes and you hear the call for prayer, then you will know who is the victorious."



Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi started his career in Islamic studies at the age of fifteen in the traditional Islamic seminary in Qum after studying Arabic and Farsi with his respected father and other scholars. He studied in Qum for ten years and attended the *kharij* lessons of Ayatullah Wahid Khurasani. Thereafter, he moved to Vancouver where he served the Shia community and completed a Masters degree in History at the Simon Fraser University. From 1991 until the current time he is based in Toronto where he serves as the resident scholar at the Ja'ffari Islamic Centre. He has written a number of articles and books which have been translated into a variety of languages.

In other words, in the call of the prayer, every day, my grandfather's name is announced and not of your Umayyid ancestors!

2) Both were 'Sayyid'

Yahya was 'sayyid, the honourable' while Hussain is 'sayyid, the chief of the youths of Paradise.' In the hereafter, Hussain will even be the 'sayyid' of Prophet Yahya!

3) Both were 'Guiders'

Yahya was a 'nabi' (a 'prophet' who receives the message of Allah) and becomes the source of guidance for the people.

Hussain was an Imam who faithfully preserved the message of Allah (sent to Prophet Muhammad) and conveyed it to people. Their function was the same: to guide the people to Allah.

4) Both were 'Saaliheen'

Yahya was "from the Saliheen, the good-doers" who protested the evil-deeds of the ruler of his time. See the story from the Bible:

He pointed out the sins of the king, Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. This can be seen in chapter 14 of the Book of Matthew, verses 3-4:

Verse 3: Now it was Herod who had arrested John, chained him up and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.

Verse 4: For John had told him, 'It is against the Law for you to have her.'

In Chapter 6 of the book of Mark, verses 17 – 18, we are told that Herod had married his brother Philip's wife, Herodias:

Verse 17: Now it was this same Herod who had sent to have John arrested and had had him chained up in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife whom he had married.

Verse 18: For John had told Herod, 'It is against the law for you to have your brother's wife.'

As we read further in chapter 6 of the Book of Mark, it is mentioned that Herodias wanted to kill John:

Verse 19: As for Herodias, she was furious with him and wanted to kill him, but she was not able to do so

Verse 20: Because Herod was in awe of John, knowing him to be a good and upright man, and gave him his protection. When he had heard him speak, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he liked to listen to him.

Verse 21: An opportunity came on Herod's birthday when he gave a banquet for the nobles of his court, for his army officers and for the leading figures in Galilee.

Verse 22: When the daughter of this same Herodias came in and danced, she delighted Herod and his guests; so the king said to the girl, 'Ask me anything you like and I will give it you.'

Verse 23: And he swore her an oath, 'I will give you anything you ask, even half my kingdom.'

Verse 24: She went out and said to her mother, 'What shall I ask for?' She replied, 'The head of John the Baptist.'

Verse 25: The girl at once rushed back to the king and made her request, 'I want you to give me John the Baptist's head, immediately, on a dish.'

Verse 26: The king was deeply distressed but, thinking of the oaths he had sworn and of his guests, he was reluctant to break his word to her.

Verse 27: At once the king sent one of the bodyguards with orders to bring John's head.

Verse 28: The man went off and beheaded him in the prison; then he brought the head on a dish and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother.

Similarly, Imam Hussain (as) protested against Yazid and refused to recognize him as a legitimate leader of Muslims for "he was a drunkard, a murderer of innocent souls, and an open sinner."

On a side note, its worth realizing that a faithful follower of Imam Hussain will never drink alcohol if he remembers what Yazid did with the head of Hussain (as). In the words of Imam Riza (as): "So whoever is from our Shias, he should refrain from intoxicants and chess. And whoever sees intoxicants or chess, then he should remember Imam Hussain and curse Yazid and the family of Yazid. Thus, Almighty Allah will erase his sins even if they are as many as the stars."

In other words, both Yahya and Hussain were doing *amr bil ma'roof* (commanding good) and *nahi 'anil munkar* (forbidding evil). Imam Hussain, in his written will, explains the purpose and method of his mission. He wrote: "...I have risen only for seeking reform in the community of my grandfather and I would like to command good and forbid evil."

5) A Difference

Yahya was 'chaste' in the sense that he was not yet married when he was killed. While Hussain was married. This makes the test and trial of Imam Hussain (as) comparatively more difficult and yet Hussain willingly sacrificed everything for the sake of Allah. Two lines of poetry attributed to Imam Hussain (as) on the day of Ashura truly reflects his inner most feelings:

تركت الخلق طرا في هواك
وأيتت العيال لكي أراك
فلو قطعتموه في الحب إربا
لما مال الفواد إلى سواك

*I left the world for sake of Your love
I let my children be orphans for meeting Thee
If they cut my heart into pieces in Your love
My heart will not turn but to Thee*

Similarities in Martyrdoms

1) Status of their Killers

In Shia narrations from the Imams, we see statements that the killer of Yahya bin Zakariyyah (as) was of illegitimate birth, as was the killer of Hussain bin Ali (as).

Some comments on what legitimacy of birth entails are relevant here:

1. Islam greatly values the legitimacy in birth; and therefore marriage –as the only means of legitimate birth– is considered a good deed.
2. In Shia Islam, there is a very well-known view about those who hate Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (as): According to the Prophet (saw), none can hate Ali but a person who is either a hypocrite (munafiq) or of impure birth (i.e., either through fornication or conceived at a time when relations were forbidden between a couple). For example, Abu Saeed al-Khudari says, "We the community of Ansaar used to test our children by their love for Ali (as). If a child was born amongst us and didn't love Ali, we would not consider him to be from us." Similar statements can be seen from Ubaadah bin as-Saamit and Jabir bin Abdullah al-Ansari.

1. Ibn Qutaybah in al-Imamah was-Siyaasah. Also see Hasan al-Basri's comment when he was told about the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, "Worst is a community in which an adulteress's son kills its Prophet's son." Al-Baladhuri, Ansaab al-Ashraaf, vol. 3, p. 1351.

3. This belief has some important implications in our faith: on a positive side, a legitimate relationship will perpetuate the love of Ahlul Bayt among the people; and, on a negative side, a person of illegitimate birth is disqualified from certain duties such as leading the congregational prayers, etc.

4. A final, and important point in these remarks, is that this refers only to those who have hatred (bughz) towards Imam Ali (as). Therefore, it does not refer to the vast majority of Sunni Muslims or non-Muslims who do not necessarily have hatred towards Ali even if they don't believe in his successorship. They don't believe in him as the first khalifa but still respect him. In short, disbelief and hatred are not the same; and so bear in mind that not all Sunnis are Nasibi (those who have hatred towards Ali).

If you study the biographical notes about those who were involved in killing Imam Hussain (as), you will come to know that they were of illegitimate birth: Yazid, Ibn Ziyaad, Shimr and others. Muslim historians have talked about the status of their birth.

When Ibn Ziyaad sent the message through Umar ibn Saad that "Hussain must pledge allegiance to Yazid on my hand," Imam Hussain (as) responded clearly by saying, "Should I surrender to the son of an adulteress? No, by Allah, I shall not do so. I will rather die before it, and that would be more pleasant."¹

On the day of Ashura, Imam Hussain said in his sermon:

"Verily, the bastard, son of a bastard, has given me two choices: sword or disgrace. Far be disgrace from us! هيهات منا الذلة Allah, His Messenger, the believers, and pure wombs and proud souls will not allow that obeying a sinful ruler be preferred over an honourable death." (This settles the question whether Imam Ali willingly pledged to the caliphates of his time.)

2) The Heavens Cried Blood upon Their Martyrdom

There are narrations from the Shia Imams that the heaven cried blood upon their martyrdoms.

But can such a thing be possible from Islamic point of view? Well, verse 29 of Surah Dukhan, after describing the end of Pharaoh and his people, says, “The heaven and the earth did not cry on them.”

This verse gives an indication that the earth and sky have the ability to cry. They simply didn't in the context of the above verse with Pharaoh, and they did for Yahya and Hussain. We can't comprehend how they cry, but we shouldn't be surprised. In verse 44 of surah Israh of the Quran Allah says that the heavens and the earth sing the praise of God, but that is also something which is beyond our comprehension.



Yahya's head spoke to the king and said, “Fear Almighty Allah.”

But did it really happen? Are there any reports verifying it? Al-Baladhuri, a Sunni historian, in his Ansaab al-Ashraaf, makes the following remarks:

Muhammad bin Sirin: “This kind of redness was not seen in the sky until the killing of Hussain.” (vol. 3, p. 1329)

Abi Qabil: “The sky become dark on the day Hussain was killed until the stars were visible.” (ibid)

Saalim al-Qaas: “On the day of Hussain's killing, the sky rained blood.” (ibid)

Ibn Shihaab: “On the day of Hussain's killing, no stone in Shaam was picked up but that there was blood underneath it.” (vol. 3, p. 1351)

3) Both Heads Spoke after Martyrdom

Both of their heads retained the ability to speak after martyrdom.

Yahya's head spoke to the king and said, “Fear Almighty Allah.”

As for Imam Hussain, his head was heard reciting verses of the Qur'an multiple times.

The Prophet (saw) had said that the Ahlul Bayt and the Qur'an will never separate from one another till the day of judgement. Its real meaning is that you cannot be a true follower of the Qur'an without being the follower of Ahlul Bayt, nor a true follower of Ahlul Bayt without being a follower of the Qur'an.

But on an extraordinary level, it means that even if you sever the head of Hussain, you cannot separate him from the Qur'an – his blessed head will still recite the Qur'an on the spearhead!

4) Both Heads were Presented to Tyrants in Trays

The heads of both were presented in a tray to the tyrant ruler of their times.

For Prophet Yahya, his martyrdom was provoked by the ruler's wife and daughter, after which his head was presented on a tray. Refer to the previously quoted sections of Mark 6:19 for the narration.

When the head of the Imam Hussain (as) was brought in the presence of Yazid, he started hitting it with his cane, especially on the lips and teeth of Imam Hussain. Abu Barazah al-Aslami, (a companion of the Prophet) when he saw this, he could not tolerate it. He said: “O Yazid, move your cane; for by Allah I have seen the Prophet (saw) kissing these lips and those of his brother Hasan; and he used to say, ‘You both are chiefs of the youths of Paradise; may Allah curse your killers and prepare the hell-fire for them.’ O Yazid, on the day of judgement, Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad will be your intercessor while he (Hussain) will come with Prophet Muhammad (saw) as his intercessor!” Yazid became angry and asked him to be removed from the audience.



The Prophet (saw) had said that the Ahlul Bayt and the Qur'an will never separate from one another till the day of judgement. Its real meaning is that you cannot be a true follower of the Qur'an without being the follower of Ahlul Bayt, nor a true follower of Ahlul Bayt without being a follower of the Qur'an.



The only – and significant – difference, is that Yahya (as) was single during all these events, whereas Imam Hussain (as) was not only married, but also had a family with him, who were integral to the journey and saga of Karbala and beyond.

The Prophet (saw) had said that the Ahlul Bayt and the Qur'an will never separate from one another till the day of judgement. Its real meaning is that you cannot be a true follower of the Qur'an without being the follower of Ahlul Bayt, nor a true follower of Ahlul Bayt without being a follower of the Qur'an.

Then the Catholic told Yazid, "Woe to you, remove the head from yourself otherwise Allah will destroy you."

Yazid ordered that the Catholic be killed. Amazingly, the Catholic priest died with the kalima of Islam on his lips!

Interestingly, the Masjid Umawi in Damascus is the same place where you can see the maqam-e ra's of Yahya's head and maqam-e ra's of Hussain. "Maqam-e ra's" here means the place where the heads had been placed.

Conclusion

Shia hadith talk about the many similarities between Yahya and Hussain. Reviewing the struggles they faced, they both opposed the rulers of their time for similar reasons, they both were similarly martyred, both of their heads were presented to rulers in trays and were placed in the same Damascus palace, and the skies & earth cried upon their martyrdoms.

The only – and significant – difference, is that Yahya (as) was single during all these events, whereas Imam Hussain (as) was not only married, but also had a family with him, who were integral to the journey and saga of Karbala and beyond.



benefa

In these days a voice rings loud throughout humanity.
Its a voice so loud amongst the chaos and insanity.

In these days a hand reaches down to help we the needy.
Its a hand that's often ignored by us, the proud & the greedy.

In these days a light illuminates the heavens and the earth.
It's a light oft ignored and not given its true value and worth.

In these times we find ourselves in, we've heard it before:
"Opportunities exist to become your best self, altruism restore!"

Wealth will be lost, minds will be eroded and worries abound.
Is it possible anything good within this can really ever be found?

Ah! but with all that is lost there is yet the very best to be gained!
It's our purpose, our humanity, our morals that have so long waned.

Look in the eyes of the medic, the doctor, and the nurse!
Across the planet working tirelessly as they disperse.

Look to the carers and Samaritans! In service they immerse.
From all walks of life they seem to be a group so diverse.

But look closer and you will see within their souls an evident unicity.
Wherefrom it manifests its beneficence and into multiplicity!

icence

Its The Voice!

It's The Light and it's The Hand
that reaches us each and everyone!
It calls to us to revert and retreat
to our natures, a return to
The One!

To remind us that this like all the others
is destined to depart.

So listen!

See!

Take hold!

Rediscover and nurture your humanity!
Embark upon your ascension

Beginning with your heart!

'Abū al-Ḥasan (Muḥammad Yāsīn)
Sha'bān al-Mu'azzam, 1441
The Holy City of Qom

You can watch the video for this poem, produced
by aBStudios. **Please Visit and subscribe to The
Batool Foundation's YouTube channel here**

Q&A

This is where our contributors and editors answer your questions, so please keep sending them to alwarith@imamhussain-lib.com

Q I am going through a pretty stressful time in my life right now and I feel I'm a bit lost and need guidance from God. What is the best way to ask Him for help and guidance?

A Trials in life are part of our journey towards the All-Merciful and as such seeking guidance is as simple as asking for it and having faith that an answer will present itself. In asking this question and seeking an answer you are already on the path of guidance. Consult with rational, helpful and experienced people for the issues at hand and then put your trust in God. All believers are in the best situation for them at any given time.

For more traditions and explanation about dealing with trials see this three-part series on The Scale of Wisdom Podcast:

[Part 1](#)

[Part 2](#)

[Part 3](#)

The episode on anxiety may also be useful, click [here](#)

For a complete list of all podcasts exploring a wide variety of everyday topics, please click [here](#)

Q Is it necessary to believe in God and why? Why is it not sufficient to be a good person?

A While the cosmos is created with certain existential rules that benefit those who are good, for deeds to have a lasting effect past this world belief in God is necessary, as the same act that is done by a believer in God will last past this world, whereas the act of a good person who does not believe in God will eventually come to naught. Furthermore, sincere belief in God is something that aids a person to be truly good, as belief in God pulls a person towards their better self, through love, knowledge and wisdom.

Q How is it fair that a man can leave the house without telling his wife but she has to take permission from him? How does this prove equality or anything but inferiority and ownership?

A Islam has stressed the equality of men and women when it comes to their relationship with God. Their actions and attitudes are their own and they will be recompensed with justice and mercy. When it comes to some of the rulings on a sociological level, while they may not be the same for a man and woman, that doesn't affect their equality in front of God and certainly doesn't indicate inferiority as the Qur'an has clearly defined the benchmark of superiority being that of God-consciousness. There is also no ownership as the woman is a free woman and is responsible in front of God. It is her choice to follow these rules in her obedience to God, and for that she achieves the spiritual progression which is the benchmark of excellence.

At the same time, there is much discussion on the rulings related to women and the paradigms that have been used throughout our intellectual history to determine the rulings in different epochs. While that discussion has not resulted in a change of view of many scholars in regards to the specific ruling in your question, research is continually being made to apply our understanding of Islamic law in each time and the concern that you have raised is one that is taken seriously in intellectual circles, bearing in mind the changing roles of women in the modern world.







THE BATOOL (AS) FOUNDATION
مؤسسة البتول عليها السلام

*Please send contributions for all future issues, comments and questions to:
alwarith@imamhussain-lib.com*